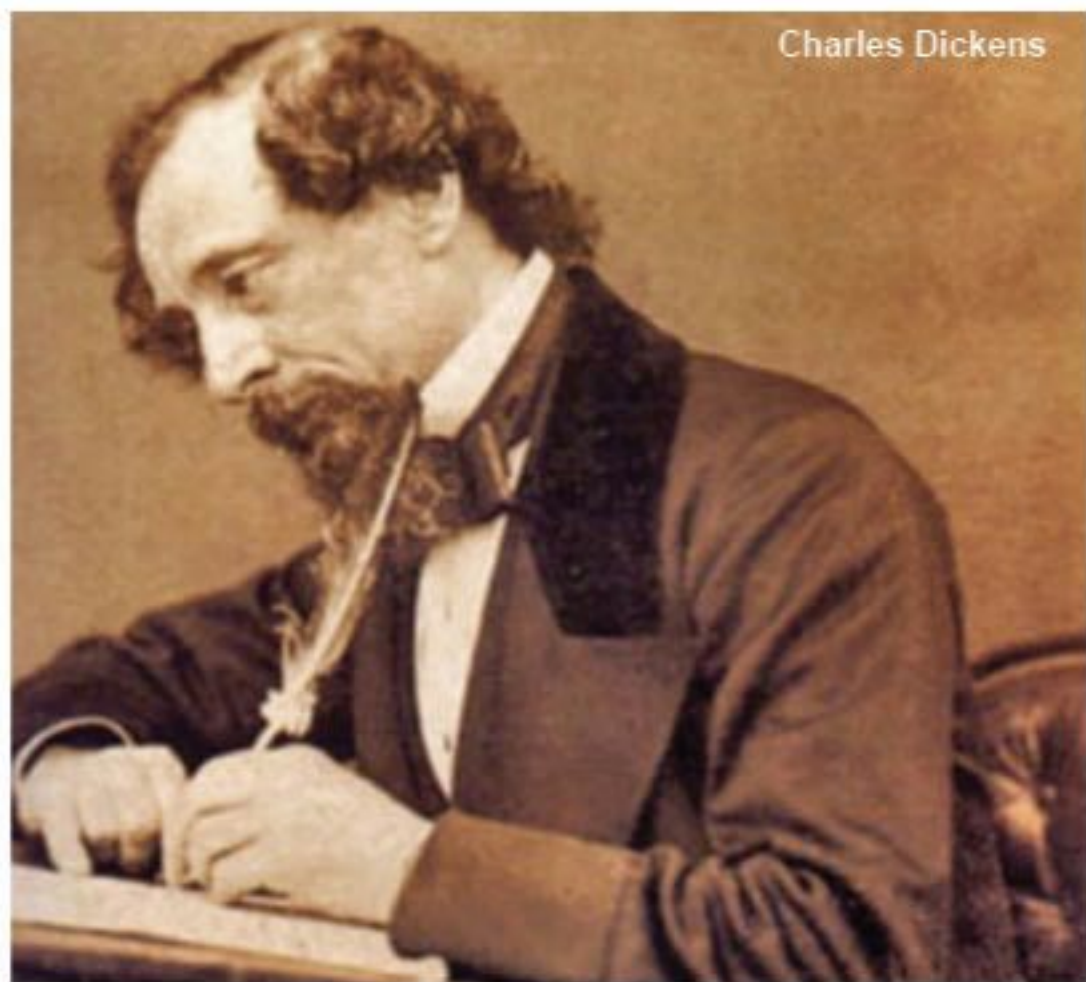


Dickens House: Insight Into The Life Of A Great Novelist

Dickens House just a stone's throw from Russell Square creates a penetrating flash of insight into the life of one of Britain's greatest novelists.



Charles Dickens

The house takes visitors back to 18th century London. The only surviving London home of Dickens (from 1837 until 1839) was opened as a Museum in 1925 and is still welcoming visitors from all over the world in an authentic and inspiring surrounding. On four floors, there are paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, original furniture and many items relating to the novelist's life.

The dining room on the first floor was the site of many dinner parties which were attended by many of

London's literary elite. In the morning room is a bust of Dickens created by Angus Fletcher. The drawing room on the first floor has been refurbished to the state it was during Dickens residence- lilac walls and plum furniture have been recreated from documents and paint samples found in the room. Also on the second floor is the small study that is believed to be the room that Dickens used to write. The desk that Dickens used at the time of his death can be viewed here. On the second floor are Dickens bedroom and the



Dickens's writing desk

Dickens & his wife Catherine Hogarth



room where his sister-in-law Mary Hogarth died shortly after they had arrived in the house. A letter by Mary is on display, as are numerous theatre related documents and memorabilia. The halls and rooms of the house are hung with paintings, documents and various pieces of art.

The Dickens House shop offers a wide range of books of Dickens's work including hardbacks, paperbacks, rare, antique,

children's, simplified and abridged for students and biographical studies. There is a good selection of posters and prints and a wide range of souvenirs.

Charles Dickens was born in Landport, Portsmouth, on February 7, 1812. His father John worked as a clerk in the Navy Payroll Office in Portsmouth. The elder Dickens was transferred several times, first to London, then to Chatham, and finally, in 1822,

back to London, where the family lived in Camden Town.

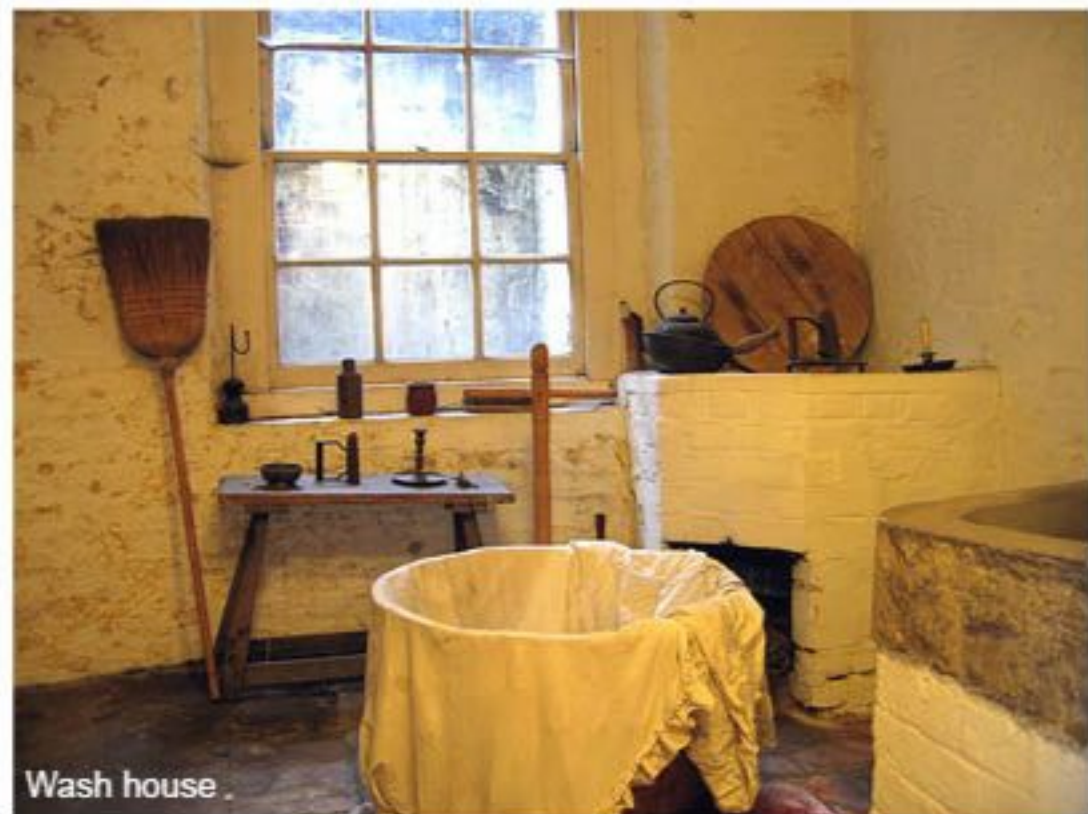
John Dickens was constantly in debt, and in 1824 he was imprisoned in Marshalsea debtors' prison (Southwark). Charles was forced to leave school at the age of 12 and go to work in a bootblack factory to help support the Dickens family.

It was his personal experience of factory work and the living conditions of the poor that created in Dickens the compassion which

was to mark his literary works such as *Oliver Twist*.

Dickens was released from the purgatory of Warren's Blacking Factory when his father received a legacy from a relative, and could finally pay his debts and be set free from Marshalsea. Charles went to Wellington House Academy for two years, then took work at Gray's Inn as a clerk.

Dickens worked as a Parliamentary reporter before finally moving on to *The Morning Chronicle* in 1834.



Wash house .

Dickens House Museum near Russell Square



His first published work appeared in Monthly Magazine in December 1833, and he followed it with nine more, penning his name as «Boz»

to the last two articles. The pseudonym «Boz» was drawn from a pet name for his younger brother when they were children.

In 1836 his articles were compiled and published as «Sketches by Boz».

Shortly after Boz was published, Dickens married, to Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of a co-worker at the Morning Chronicle newspaper. Together they had 10 children before they separated in 1858, but it was not Catherine but her younger sister, Mary, who was to prove the inspiration for many of Dickens's literary heroines. She remained to him an ideal of

womanhood that found expression in his characters such as Rose Maylie (Oliver Twist), and Agnes Wickfield (David Copperfield).

Dickens followed up «Sketches» with his first commercial success, «Pickwick Papers» (more properly The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club). This collection of 20 short stories was appeared in monthly instalments and it became a publishing phenomenon - easily the most widely read literary work in English to that date.



Drawing room

Introducing Dickens House Museum

THIS HOUSE

The Museum is on 4 floors.

1st Floor

Dickens's Dining Room,
The Morning Room, with a display on Dickens's family,
Shop.

2nd Floor

The Library, with an exhibition on *The Dickenses*,
The 'Still Room', with a film on Dickens every half hour,
Dickens's Wine Cellar; and the Wash House.

3rd Floor

Dickens's Drawing Room, restored to the state it would
have been in in 1839.
Dickens's Study.

4th Floor

Dickens's Bedroom, with an exhibition on his Readings,
The Mary Hogarth Room.

Welcome to this house,
where Charles Dickens and
his family lived 1837-9.

Dickens's other London houses have
been demolished. This one has been
a Dickens museum since 1925.

☞ Please buy admission tickets in the Shop ☞

Although the series was largely humorous, it also dealt with the grim social iniquities of the time, and it was this awareness and concern for the plight of the lower classes that was to mark much of Dickens's life work.

Dickens was working on another serialised novel while *Pickwick Papers* was running. This work proved to be one of his most enduring, a tale of innocence amid the squalor of London's criminal classes, *Oliver Twist*, which was published from 1837-38.

Dickens kept up his prodigious output, and *Nicholas Nickleby* followed quickly on the heels of *Oliver Twist*. In his new work Dickens tried to combine the humour of *Pickwick* with the cry for

social reforms of *Oliver*. It worked, and sales of *Nicholas Nickleby* reached 50,000 copies every month.

Dickens started his own magazine, a weekly titled *Master Humphrey's Clock*. In MHC he introduced the tragic heroine, Little Nell, in the serialised tale of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. It was this work which gave him international fame, and the name of Charles Dickens spread to the USA, where he was enormously popular.

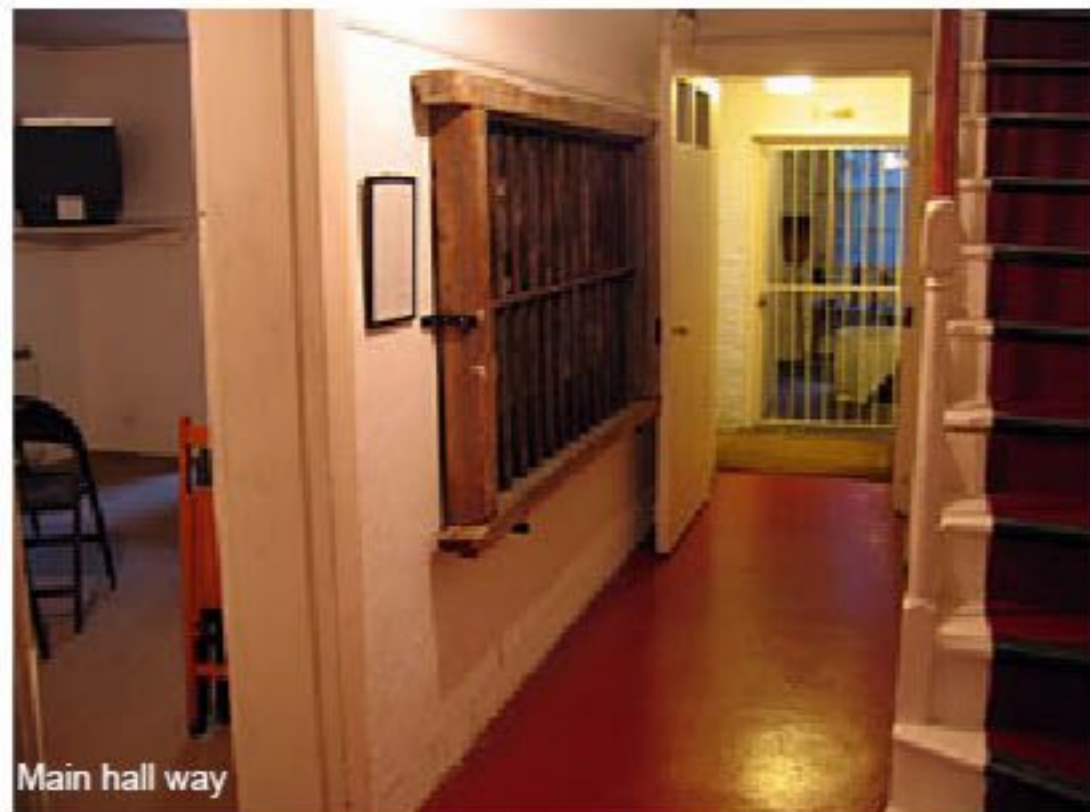
In December 1843 Dickens wrote one of his most enduring works, the short story entitled *A Christmas Carol*. Lesser known Christmas tales followed in subsequent years, such as *The Chimes* (1844) and *The Cricket and the Hearth*

(1845). In these stories and his longer works Dickens constantly returned to themes of social inequality and oppression of the poor.

The largely autobiographical David Copperfield followed in 1850. In that year he also helped found the Guild of Literature and Arts to assist struggling artists. The Guild raised money through public theatrical performances, and Dickens was a regular performer at Guild events. He loved the

stage, and it was this love of dramatic performance which he brought to public readings of his works.

Dickens literary output remained prolific, with later works including A Tale of Two Cities (1859), Great Expectations (1860-61), and Our Mutual Friend (1864-5). Charles Dickens died on June 9, 1870 and was buried at Westminster Abbey. There is another Dickens House Museum in Broadstairs. When Charles Dickens came to stay in



Main hall way



The old curiosity shop immortalised in Dickens's novel

Broadstairs for the first time in 1837 he was twenty-five years old and already famous, as the author of *The Pickwick Papers*, the first of his novels. He took lodgings at number 12, High Street, where he worked on the book. He was to return to the town again and again until 1851, with a final visit at the end of the decade. It was in Broadstairs that he found much of the inspiration for one of his most famous characters - Miss Betsey Trotwood, David

Copperfield's aunt.

Dickens Museum Broadstairs

